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(OR BAPTIST)

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Essays, Expositions, &c.

SECTS AND HERESIES OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH.

No. 4.—Semi-Pelagianism.

"——[and the truth shall make you free."—*Jesus Christ.*

Truth, is the life of the universe, and the only foundation of solid happiness whether in the present world or in that which is to come. Abandon truth, and we become the prey, even the slaves, of all that is base, corrupt, and destructive; and we wander on in our blindness until we plunge into the vortex of ruin, the bottomless abyss of falsehood and death. To find out truth,—to "seek her as silver, and search for her as for hid treasures,"—should be the chief business of life, the one primary end and object of reading, study, and *fervent prayer*. Compared with this, the possession of wealth, the pride of the noble, and the honours of royalty, are but an idle dream,—the chaff which the wind driveth away.

Divine truth above all other, should be the object of this devoted zeal. Ignorance here is always injurious, and frequently fatal. When known and followed, Divine truth is the lamp of life and the infallible guide to a blissful immortality; but when unknown "darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the minds of the people." And this truth is in Christ,—"the way, the Truth, and the life." To reveal him therefore, and to illustrate his government,—to explain his kingly character, and to exhibit the nature of the kingdom of his grace,—constitute the office and design of holy Scripture. It can have no other object, end, or purpose; but throughout its whole scope it must ever conform to the acknowledged statute that "the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy."

Hence, in the presence and despite the struggles of rival sects and multiplied heresies, we must refer all tenets, doctrines, and creeds, to "the spirit of prophecy." The Arian dishonours Christ, the Sabellian denies the Trinity, the Pelagian feeds the flame of human pride, and the Semi-Pelagian proposes a compromise. But all alike must bow to "the law and the testimony." No favour must be shown, no partiality, and no reserve. They must stand or fall together according to the judgment of "the truth as it is in Jesus." This has been, and will continue to be the guiding law of these papers on *the Sects and Heresies of the Christian Church*.

Cassian, an Oriental, but who belonged to a monastery at Marseilles, was the founder of the Semi-Pelagians. He broached his sentiments with considerable success in the south of France, about the year A.D. 428, and subsequently; and his aim was to furnish the church with a compromise between the low doctrines of Pelagius, and the *high* sentiments of Augustine. In other words, he proposed a middle way,—a compound—between salvation by man with Pelagius, and salvation by the free grace of God with Augustine, and he laboured with much diligence to show that the great work of our redemption was done partly by man, and partly by God. He differed from Pelagius by admitting the total depravity of man, and he equally differed from Augustine by denying the doctrine of salvation by free grace alone. Agreeing with neither entirely, but differing from both in part, he evidently aimed to unite the free-will of man with the free grace of God, in a work that should depend as much on the one as on the other, and which, between the two *might* prove a total failure at last.

In this dubious compromise he propounded the following as his leading doctrines:—1st. *That God did not dispense his grace to one, more than another in consequence of an absolute decree, but was willing to save all men, if they complied with the terms of his gospel.*—2nd. *That Christ died for all men.*—3rd. *That the grace purchased by Christ, and necessary to salvation, was offered to all men.*—4th. *That man, before he received grace, was capable of faith and holy desires.*—5th. *That man born free, was consequently capable of resisting the influences of grace, or of complying with its suggestions.*

On this statement of doctrine two remarks require to be made. First—That having avowed his belief in the total depravity of human nature, Cassian contradicted himself in the fourth of the above points when asserting that man, *before he received grace*, was capable of gracious acts, unless, indeed, he indulged in the absurd notion that total depravity can produce "holy desires." Because the state of man "before he received grace," must be, according to his own showing, one utterly depraved; how then could such a soil spontaneously produce the plants of grace? "Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one." Or, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, and figs of thistles?" According to this Semi-Pelagian they do, or man "before he received grace" could never be found "capable of faith and holy desires." Second—That in the exact proportion that the above statement of doctrine awards power to man, it deprives Divine grace of all

efficiency; or in other terms, that by so much as it does honour to man, it casts dishonour upon the grace of God. For in this Semi-Pelagian scheme, divine grace, being deprived of all settled purpose and design, is represented as a power or an agency, that may be frustrated, foiled, and defeated. It is not allowed to have a *definite object*, or a positive and certain result, such as we might and must expect God to have in every undertaking to which He applies his power; of this He is robbed by the Semi-Pelagian spoiler, and his most mighty and most precious enterprise in redemption, for which He gave the life of His Eternal Son, is reduced to a miserable contingency which may result in giving the Devil himself the means of gloating over the spoils of a defeated salvation. And shall this ever be? Shall the word of the Almighty God thus *return to him void*, and in baffled accents proclaim to an astonished and an alarmed universe, that it has failed to *prosper in the thing whereto he sent it?* Reader! Turn away from Semi-Pelagianism, however plausible, and its modern successor Arminianism, however popular and sleek. Turn from them, and listen to another and a surer voice that speaks, "*Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my word shall not pass away.*"

Semi-Pelagianism was condemned by a Synod, held at Orange, in A.D. 520, and afterwards by another, held under Boniface, at Rome. It wandered about in Europe for a considerable period, but met with few supporters; and at last it withdrew from the public gaze into obscure recesses, where the more scriptural doctrines of the free grace of God were but little known. In some such retreats there may even yet be found the vain and idle belief, that man, *apart from divine grace*, "is capable of faith and holy desires," but its practical extinction affords decisive proof of the futility of the Semi-Pelagian compromise between free-will and free grace. All such attempts at compounding opposite principles are evidences of weakness, and a want of faith in the majestic doctrines of Divine truth. Man must be meddling. Not content to take the word of God *as it is*, and honestly to yield to him the prerogative of claiming "a remnant, according to the election of grace;" poor human reason, darkened by sin, and more deeply obscured by the pride of intellect to which sin has given birth, will superadd a scheme of its own, whose fundamental principle is, that *men elect themselves*. Setting aside the election of the Infinitely wise and ever merciful God,—busy in finding flaws in the system of Eternal love, and assuming to know better than the great Maker of heaven and earth,—human reason, though contracted to a proverb, proposes a plan that makes our everlasting salvation far more dependent on the creature than on the Uncreated ruler of the universe! Alas for the empty pride of the human heart! Alas for our depraved folly, that would dictate to the great Supreme! "*Vain man would be wise, though man be born like a wild ass's colt.*"

W. S.

PAUL'S THORN IN THE FLESH.

2 Corinthians xii. 7.

No. 2.

The writer of the letter already given (page 5), has stated his opinion that the "thorn in the flesh" was no other than "diseased eyes," or, "chronical ophthalmia," and this opinion he supports by a variety of observations that must be acknowledged as interesting, if not entirely convincing. But whether all who read that letter will agree in the conclusions of the writer, is extremely doubtful, especially when the following opinions are considered.

Tyndale, in his translation of 1549, has the following note on the subject, "Though men of much greater knowledge than I am, do take this unquietness for the resistance that the wicked made against the doctrine of Paul; yet, in my judgment, the text giveth rather, that it should be the weakness of his own flesh which did continually pull him back, and as it were did withstand him by force of arms in the affairs and business of the spirit."*

In *Beza's* notes on the passage, the following occurs; "He meaneth concupiscence, that sticketh fast in us, as it were a thorn, insomuch as it constrained Paul himself, being regenerate, to cry out, I do not that good that I would, &c. And he calleth that a thorn, by a borrowed kind of speech taken from thorns or stumps, which are very dangerous and hurtful for the feet, if a man walk through woods that are cut down."

Dr. Gill, after a lengthened reference to the views of others, gives his own, thus:—"But, after all, I see not but that the Devil himself may be meant; for, as before observed, the phrase, *a thorn in the flesh*, is metaphorical, and the other, *a messenger of Satan*, is literal, and explains it; and the whole may be read thus, *there was given to me a thorn in the flesh*, namely, *the angel Satan, to buffet me*; so that Satan, who was once an angel of light, now of darkness, is *the thorn in the flesh*; and might be suffered to appear visibly to him, from time to time in a very terrible manner, and which was very grievous to be borne; he might, by permission, have great power over his body, as he had over Job's, to use it ill, to beat and buffet it; for this also may be taken literally; and he might likewise other ways greatly distress him, by stirring up the corruptions of his heart; by following him with his satanical injections, suggestions, and temptations; by raising violent persecutions, and instigating many of his emissaries against him; and this sense is the rather to be chosen, because it includes all others that have any show of truth."

Dr. Adam Clarke, gives the following as his opinion, "I believe the apostle to refer simply to the distresses he had endured through the opposition he met with at Corinth, which were as painful and grievous to him as *a thorn in the flesh*, or his being *bound to a stake*." And in reference to the belief of some *bodily infirmity*, he adds that he thinks it to be very unlikely.

* The spelling is modernised. In the text, 2 Corinthians xii. 7, the venerable translator renders it "an unquietness of the flesh," &c.

Macknight, Whitby, Jortin, and others, agree in thinking the thorn to be, some bodily weakness, occasioned by his rapture, and which might have affected his looks, speech, or gesture.—*Whitby* also unites with *Doddridge, Boothroyd* and others, in describing it to be an affliction by paralytic symptoms, and *Dr. Watts* regarded it as a nervous debility, affecting the spirits and speech.

Numerous authorities might be given in confirmation of the above, some on one side, and some on the other; but as the foregoing represent the divided opinions of eminent men on this disputed point, it is not necessary to add to their number. It is evident that the nature of "the thorn in the flesh" cannot be *positively* determined; and it follows that what is plainly beyond our knowledge, can never be decided by speculative controversy. Mere opinion can settle nothing, and that which inspiration has left in doubt, is placed far beyond the reach of human demonstration.

Taking the case, however, as it is, and viewing it in its whole scope and bearing, it will justify the following general conclusions:—

1. That Paul was in danger from pride, on account of the "abundance of revelations" with which he had been favoured.

2. That in order to preserve him from that great temptation, and to keep him humble, this "thorn in the flesh,—the messenger of Satan," was sent to buffet or afflict him, as a counterpoise to the tendency to pride in his own heart.

3. That this "thorn," whatever it may have been, was plainly *in the flesh*, and had in some way or other to do with the body; and the probability is that it was carnal and sensual. Nor is it beyond possibility that he referred to this very "thorn" in 1 Cor. ix. 27. "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection," &c.

4. But whatever this "messenger of Satan," may have been, its salutary office was intended to teach the Apostle that notwithstanding the "abundance of the revelations" given him, and the astonishing honour to which he had been raised; he required, fully as much as the weakest of his brethren, the all-sufficient grace of Christ, to keep him from falling, and that equally with them, he was, after all, *but a poor, helpless, sinful man.** S.

* It is worth while to consider whether Paul himself does not refer to this "thorn," or some of its effects, in those words quoted from his adversaries, "his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible." (2 Corinthians x. 10) If the representations of some early writers are to be credited, the personal appearance of the great Apostle was the reverse of dignified and commanding. "He was," says Chrysostom, "a little man, about three cubits [or four feet and a half] in height." The author of Philopatris, probably Lucian, is generally supposed to refer to Paul, when he says, "A Galilean, rather bald-headed, with an aquiline nose, who travelled through the air into the third heaven." It should be recollected that all Christians were then scornfully called *Galileans*.

Nicephorus Callistus gives the fullest description of Paul's person. He says, "St. Paul was small of stature, stooping, and rather inclinable to crookedness, pale-faced, of an elderly look, bald on the head. His eyes, lively, keen, and cheerful, shaded in part by his eyebrows, which hung a little over. His nose, rather long, and not ungracefully bent. His beard pretty thick of hair, and of a sufficient length; and, like his locks, interspersed with grey." Such, next to the blessed Redeemer himself, was the greatest man the world has ever seen. Mournfully true it is, and a sad proof of human folly, that "*Man looketh on the outward appearance*" *alone.*—See *Toplady's Complete Works*, page 450.

SIGHT RESTORED.

By S. Lillycrop, Windsor.

"Lord, that I may receive my sight."—Luke xviii. 41.

"Light is good, and a pleasant thing it is to see the sun."

When God created the world, He formed it an opaque body, and so it must have continued, had He not been pleased by the formation of light, to illuminate the work of His hands. Oh! what a morning was that when the first rays of light spread over the universe, "when the morning stars sang together, and the sons of God shouted for joy." Beautiful, indeed, are the landscapes of nature, when surveyed upon a summer morning by a Christian philosopher, from some lofty elevation. There he beholds the works of God, and exclaims, with ecstacy, "The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth his handy work." But how changed the circumstances, when one like the poor blind man of Bethsaida ascends the same mountain top. He may hear the guide describe the beauty of the scene, but he cannot gather one ray of light to bring to his obscured vision a true conception of the view. Imagination and fancy may play around his mind, but the realities are hidden from his sight. Is it to be wondered at, that such a poor blind mortal, hearing of the name and fame of Jesus, in healing all manner of diseases, in casting out devils, in even raising the dead, that he should apply to him with anxiety and earnestness, crying aloud, as he heard him pass, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy upon me?" For to whom could he go but unto Christ, who had the words of eternal life? It was prophesied of him, by the seraphic Isaiah, that "The eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf be unstopped, the lame man shall leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing." And how truly were these things done by him who came "to seek and to save that which was lost." This poor man did not cry in vain, when he came to Jesus, and said, "Lord, that I might receive my sight," for Jesus said unto him, "Receive thy sight, thy faith hath saved thee; and immediately he received his sight, and followed him." Here then is the mighty power of God displayed in his dear Son, and here is a poor man restored to the full enjoyment of that vision, which is one of the greatest blessings upon earth. But there is a blindness more to be deplored by far than that which this man of Bethsaida suffered, it is the obscuration of the mental vision—a blindness which hides from the soul all that is spiritual, holy, and eternal, which mistakes darkness for light, sin for pleasure, and gain for godliness, which walks about in self-complacency, crying, "Stand by, for I am holier than thou." Of this sort were the Pharisees of old, whom our Lord designated "blind guides," who "going about to establish their own righteousness have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God by faith." Saul, of Tarsus, was of this order, for he thought himself blameless as touching the law, and it was not until Jesus, who came into the world to save sinners, called him by his

grace, removed the scales from his eyes, that he saw his lost condition, and the way "to escape from the wrath to come." Then a new world breaks forth upon his mind—he had seen men as trees walking; now he sees them as sinners before God, transgressors of his holy law, and going the downward road to perdition. He seems himself the vilest of them all, and exclaimed, "of whom I am chief." In him was fulfilled the promise made by God, by Malachi, the prophet, "Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise, with healing in his wings," and thus Jesus became unto Paul, "wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption." Moses, by his natural vision enlarged, could view the land of Canaan from Lebanan to the desert. But Paul, by his spiritual illumination could behold the glory of God beaming forth in the face of Jesus Christ, and through his abounding grace could discern his title to the heavenly glory. Truly then, every poor sinner should exclaim, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy upon me;" but this will never be the case until he is convinced of his natural blindness by the spirit of God, and made to seek after Christ, who came into the world, "to give light to those that sit in darkness, and in the shadow of death." When the Son of David has poured a flood of light on any poor blind child of Adam, He says to him, and all similarly circumstanced, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." Thus, the blind man of Bethsaida, when his eyes were opened, followed Jesus, glorifying God, for the wonderful work which had been wrought upon him. And also the man born blind, as related in John ix. bore that most glorious testimony to the grace and power of his divine Saviour, when he told the Pharisees, plainly, "If this man were not of God, he could do nothing; and he worshipped him." When the eyes of the understanding are illuminated, and the grace of God is infused into the heart, a new creature is formed. Oh! ye children of the light, "let your light so shine before men, that they seeing your good works, may glorify your Father, who is in heaven," and come to David's royal Son, for continued and increasing light, until the more glorious light of heaven, in all its radiance and beauty, shall burst upon your enraptured vision.

WEEKLY COMMUNION.

By J. Brown, A.M.

It is generally admitted by the most eminent ecclesiastical historians and divines, that the Lord's Supper was observed *weekly*, by the Primitive Christians. But though the history of the Primitive Church may be lawfully used as collateral evidence, the question must be decided by the word of God. Well, what saith the scriptures? The words of institution (Matt. xvi. 26, 28) imply frequency, but do not settle the question how often the sacred ordinance ought to be observed. But this information is elsewhere supplied. As the shew-bread, which was

a type of the body of Christ, was set in order by the Jewish priest *every Sabbath day*, (Lev. xxi. 8) so the "bread of blessing," which is a symbol of the same body, ought to be broken and distributed by the Christian Presbyter every first day of the week. The analogy between these two institutions is very beautiful; but we do not argue from mere analogy. The approved example of the apostolic churches is our guide. We read in Acts, xx. 7, that "upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together *to break bread*, Paul preached unto them." From these words it would appear that the breaking of bread was the *weekly* practice of the church at Troas. The example of the church at Corinth, too, conducts us to the same conclusion. It appears to have been their practice, professedly, "to eat the Lord's Supper," as often as they "came together;" though that holy ordinance was sadly abused by them; (1 Cor. xi. 20) and we are assured that "the first day of the week" was the day in which they statedly assembled for public worship (1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2). They, therefore, observed the Lord's Supper as often as the first day of the week returned. It is admitted that the evidence afforded by these passages is only inferential; but the inference is so strong, that it amounts to a moral certainty. It is as strong as the evidence of the Lord's day. It is not more evident that the Primitive Christians "came together on the first day of the week" *at all*, than it is evident that they "came together *to break bread*." Should it be argued that it is not said, "they came together to break bread *every* first day of the week" it is replied, neither is it said, "they came together every first day of the week" *at all*. But if it be insisted that they observed *every* first day of the week, then it must be insisted that they broke bread *every* first day of the week, because the evidence is the same in both cases. Weekly communion and the Christian Sabbath are, therefore, equally evident. I do not say that weekly communion is as evident as the Sabbath *itself*, because I believe that the Sabbath *itself* rests on much evidence *besides* the example of the Primitive Christians. What I argue is, that weekly communion, and the weekly observance of the *Christian* Sabbath, or the Sabbath as observed in the *first* day of the week as distinguished from the *seventh*, are equally evident. The two institutions must stand or fall together; because the same argument which establishes the weekly observance of the first day, establishes weekly communion; and the same argument which invalidates weekly communion, invalidates in an equal degree, the weekly observance of the Lord's day.

Some distinguish between apostolic *example* and apostolic *command*, observing, that the apostles might sanction weekly communion in certain churches without making it imperative in the churches universally and at all times. But this distinction is inadmissible in the present instance, because we have no command for the observing of the first day any more than for the observance of the Lord's Supper on that day. The reasoning, therefore, might be applied with as much effect against the obligation of observing the first day *itself*, as against the obligation of meeting on that day to commemorate the death of Christ; for how can it be shown that the recorded order of the Primitive Churches binds us to meet for public worship on that day, but does NOT bind us *to break bread!* If the recorded order of the Primitive

Churches be preached as the *only authority* for observing the first day, it would seem very unreasonable to say that it is *no authority at all* for observing the Lord's Supper as often as it returns. (Acts xx. 7)

Does my reader enquire how it is then that most of the churches in modern times only observe the Lord's Supper once a month, once a quarter, or it may be less often? I answer, because they have deviated from the apostolic model; and I would beseech them to return to the "old paths," and to walk in "the good way," from which they have "wandered in the cloudy and dark day." Let us study to be "followers of the churches of God which in Judea were in Christ Jesus," doing "all things according to the pattern," and keeping "the ordinances as they were delivered."—(1 Thess. ii. 14; Heb. viii. 5; 1 Cor. xi. 2)

Conlig, Newtownards.

[We submit this paper to the attention of our readers, just as it came from its respected author. Upon the general question we pronounce no opinion.—ED.]

Fragment.

EARLY DEPRAVITY OF MANKIND.—It may perhaps be enquired what the wickedness was for which God destroyed this first world. Some writers have imagined it to have been an excess of idolatry; others think idolatry was not practised till after the Flood; and indeed the Scripture mentions no idolatry in these times, but describes the antediluvian wickedness to have been a general neglect of virtue and pursuit of evil. "The wickedness of man was great in the earth, and every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." There is one particular taken notice of by Moses, "The earth was filled with violence." This expression, and the severe law made against murder soon after the Flood, makes it probable that the men of this first world had taken a great license in usurping upon the lives of one another.—*Shuckford.*

SANCTIFICATION.—There is also another remarkable harmony between the holiness of God and his mercy in this work of the salvation of sinful man. The guilt of sin is not only to be forgiven and taken away by a complete atonement and sacrifice, but the sinful nature of this ruined creature is to be changed into holiness, is to be renewed and sanctified by the blessed Spirit, and reformed into the image of God his maker. He must not only be released from punishment by forgiveness, but he must be restored to the image of God by sanctifying grace; that so he may be fit company for the rest of the favourites of God in the upper world; that he may be qualified to be admitted into this society, where perfect purity and holiness are necessary for all the inhabitants of this upper world, and for such near attendants on the blessed God. In that happy state, nothing shall enter there that defileth. And therefore, concerning the criminals amongst the Corinthians, as vile and as offensive to the pure and holy God as they are represented, 1 Cor. vi. 9–11, viz. "Fornicators, idolators, adulterers, drunkards," &c.; "but," it is said, "they are washed, but they are sanctified, but they are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God."—*Dr. Watts.*

Useful Questions.

REPLY TO THE QUERY ON "CONCERTS."

Amicus begs to submit the following remarks in reply to the enquiry respecting Christians at Concerts.

Concerts and heart-felt religion are at direct variance with one another, as well as opposed to the Christian calling.—*Because*, 1st, *Concerts do not promote either love to God, or faith in Christ, or the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart.* Who are they that attend them? Are they weighty, serious, solid Christians? Are they those that love retirement and secret prayer? By no means. Rather, are they not the giddy, the vain, and the laughing professors? These are at home there, in a strange place, and in strange company, at such a scene.—2nd. *Because the precious time spent at Concerts might be employed for far better purposes.* How much better to read the Bible, or to retire for prayer, or to go and visit some poor afflicted person who needs comfort, or to teach some ignorant child. O how much better in the sight of a heart-searching God? How much more becoming in an heir of glory! And then let me ask, what if death overtook one at a Concert? Oh, I could as much dread to die at a play-house, or at a horse-race. It is awful to think upon.—3rd. *Because these Concerts quite unfit the heart for intercourse with God by prayer.* Do those that attend Concerts ever really pray? I know they may *say their prayers.* But that is quite another thing. And can they, or do they ever go to God in fervent prayer *after* attending a Concert? Are they fit for such a holy employment? Are they not confused, dissipated, and weary, and to go to God in such a state is a solemn mockery.—4th. *Because, it sets a bad example, especially to the young, to attend these Concerts.* If professors of religion go to Concerts, who can wonder that others go to plays and dancing saloons? One thing leads to another, and can a Concert-going Christian dare rebuke a play-going worldling? Were it attempted, there would be the humiliating retort of "Physician heal thyself."—5th. *Because it spends money that is urgently required for God's cause.* Oh, if this money lavished upon Concerts (for they all cost something, and most of them are *very* dear) were devoted to the cause of Missions, or the spread of Bibles, or the instruction of the ignorant, or the support of some poor hard-working but almost starving village preacher; O what good might be done! And what happy hearts and happy homes it would help to make! Surely, when these things are duly considered, Concerts must be regarded as mischievous, and deadly evils. They keep the heart from God, and the hand from usefulness. But *God is not mocked,—whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.*

ON LOTTERIES.

A Correspondent asks — Is it right for professing Christians to take any part in a Lottery? A few short years ago they were universally condemned. How is it then, that professors of long standing *now* take part in them, and that Lotteries are, in some quarters, even employed in raising funds for what such persons are pleased to call *the cause of God?* Can this be right?

Page for the Young.

THE FRENCH MECHANIC AND HIS BIBLE.

Some few years ago an elderly man purchased a Bible of a Colporteur. Of the words of exhortation which at the time were addressed to him, he still remembers that he was told that he ought to read the whole Bible, in order fully to understand the way to salvation. Now, this person was but simply a poor working man, labouring from morning to night. The moment that he became possessed of the word of God he set to work. It was not long before this good man felt himself abundantly recompensed for his labour, for he devoted several hours of the night to the perusal of his volume. The Bible showed him that he was a sinner, but that Jesus Christ had died to save sinners from eternal condemnation. He believed these good tidings, and with a view to becoming more fully acquainted with the infinite love of God, he continued searching the Scriptures with as great diligence as ever. From continually reading the Bible, the type of which was small, his sight gradually became so weak that, even in broad daylight, it was only by dint of great effort, that he could read a few verses only. The prospect which he then had of being obliged to give up the perusal of his precious Bible afflicted him deeply. Matters were in this state when he met with one of the Colporteurs. Finding him to be one who could appreciate his love for the Bible, he communicated to him his trouble. It was evening when this conversation took place, and in the glimmer of his little candle. His friend, wishing to console him by some passages from God's word, opened the poor man's Bible, which was lying on the table. But this Bible had been handled in such a manner by hands soiled by the labour of the day, that the dirt on each page rendered almost every line illegible. On this the Colporteur said to the poor man, "I think, that by to-morrow evening I shall be able to provide a remedy, I will at least try." The next day the Colporteur gave him one of the New Testaments printed in very large type for the aged. The latter opened the volume, and uttered a cry of joy, "Oh, how good the Lord is! Let us praise Him together. I have refound the eyes I had when I was twenty." And the poor man at once gave utterance to his gratitude in a prayer of thanksgiving, which was very affecting. The Colporteur afterwards presented him with a Bible, in octavo, the type of which was much larger. The workman eagerly grasped it, for it was the entire word of God that he was desirous of possessing. The Colporteur remarks, that to be able to form an idea of the joy of this man he ought to have been seen and heard at this moment. He adds, "God grant that all the Bibles I put in circulation may be accompanied with a like blessing."

After reading the above, let our young friends turn to 2 Tim. iii. 15. O, that every youth were a Timothy.

Enemies.—Go straight on and never heed them. A great man once said of them, "They are sparks which, if you do not blow, will go out of themselves." Then pass on and let them go out.

Reviews.

Nichol's Series of Standard Divines. *Goodwin's Works*, vol. 7. Edinburgh: James Nichol. London: James Nisbet and Co. Dublin: W. Robertson, 576pp.

"Standard" books are the staple food of a nation's life. Where these are vapid, sentimental, or simply amusing, the community will be weak, affected, and frivolous. There will be no *thinkers* among such a people, but the entire public mind (with few exceptions), will be giddy, impulsive, and never steady to a given point. The song, the dance, the "novel," and the theatre, will, to dreamers like these, carry greater attractions than the master minds whom nature kindly gives as guides to lasting greatness.

But where the standard supply is solid, weighty, and thoughtful; where the recreative sentiment is made to bow and do obeisance to the intellectual, and the profound; there the people, habituated to thought, and trained to converse with true greatness, grow up to solid excellence and every noble pursuit, with all the regularity that marks the connection between cause and effect. In the foregoing condition the men are only children; but in the latter, even the very children are men.

This holds good in a special manner, with a nation's divinity. Faith, the only foundation and source of pure morals, depends for its tone and character, its strength and activity, upon the divinity from which it springs. Where this abounds in great principles, noble thoughts, and elevating tendencies; there faith grows up to a manly stature, to God-like converse, and divine assurance of a glory to come. Such a faith can work or suffer—encounter difficulty with boldness, and face death itself without fear. It will rise to confidence with an Abraham, to fearless fidelity with an Elijah, and to an undying zeal with a Paul. Such a faith was that of the Puritans, but it sprang from a Calvinistic theology that, from unavoidable necessity, becomes more familiar with the grand, everlasting purpose of God, than with the diminutive expedients and shallow contingencies of feeble man.

But such a faith never exists, for in truth it never can live, where the theology is impregnated with an Arminianism that excludes the *special* grace of God. Within that narrow circle, faith, such as it is, may be here to-day and gone to-morrow! Dependent on human volition, the prey of every impulse, and the sport of all that is capricious in the heart of man; it turns about with every "wind of doctrine," moves along its course with fitful irregularity,—now a swift-winged racer, urging on with fiery zeal towards the goal,—and then the idler sunk in dishonourable slumbers;—now the picture of health;—and then sickening into a premature decay;—now burning with ardour to save the world, and then contentedly accepting "the pleasures of sin, which are but for a season." In such an atmosphere, religion becomes a perpetual changeling, never steady to a settled purpose: and, void of great and noble principles, it finally sinks into a mere sentiment, with no higher ambition than that of existing as the football of some proud and worldly sect.

By the publication of this "series of Standard Divines," Mr. Nichol

has done much to check the Arminian tendency of the age. Such an antidote was of pressing urgency, and these beautiful volumes are rapidly supplying it. Would that every minister, of every sect, could be induced to read and digest the divinity of these works. How different, soon, would be the food of the people. A new class of motives would speedily spring up in their minds, and instead of the legalism that *drives* them to an unwilling obedience, there would be the love of hearts bursting with gratitude for the free and unmerited grace of God. In the one case supposed, there is the *slave*, obeying because he *must*, but in the other, the affectionate *child*, obeying because he *loves*.

This volume abounds with the rich divinity of which *Thomas Goodwin* was such an acknowledged master. There is nothing superficial, feeble, or truculent about the works of this eminent man, but everything profound, strong, and manly. He is equally doctrinal and practical, but he takes care throughout to place both in their true positions. He never expects "grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles," and is far too sound a divine to seek living fruit on the dead tree of unregenerate man. The following quotation will impart a correct idea of the wisdom of this "master builder" in the work of God:—

"He [the Apostle] begins with election, 'According as he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world;' and withal lays forth the proper principal designment of election, as the first act of all other towards us; and the first and principal is holiness, 'to be holy and unblameable before him in love.' So that as the act of election is distinguished from predestination, and is the first of the two, so the primary and first aim God in that first act of election had was holiness, as essential to the person who was to be in Christ; and their adoption, or sonship, or right to eternal life or glory, which is the act of predestination, as it is distinguished from election, is but as an outward privilege or dignity superadded. When God chooseth a man, he chooseth him for himself; (Psalm iv. 3) for himself to converse with, to communicate himself unto him as a friend, a companion, and his delight. Now, it is holiness that makes us fit to live with the Holy God for ever, since without it we cannot see him, (Heb. xii. 14) which is God's whole aim."—Pages 239, 240.

Should any man say that such a divinity encourages sin "that grace may abound," we would simply remind such an one of the command in the moral law, "*Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.*"

TRY AND TRY AGAIN. Being an Outline of the Lives of Two Youths who became Clergymen of the Church of England. By "Old Jonathan." 8th Thousand. London: W. Macintosh, 24, Paternoster-row. 280 pages.

This handsome book is intended for boys, by whom it can hardly be read without both interest and profit. Upon the whole the narrative is well sustained, yet here and there passages of Holy Scripture appear to be *forced* into the service of the writer, rather than to have come to his aid in a more spontaneous manner. The book abounds with proofs of a good intention, but some few points we respectfully submit to the author's notice.

First. Why affect the anonymous in any sense, when the narrative itself, especially the latter part, abundantly publishes the author's name in the works he has already given to the world? There can be no mistake about the industrious and meritorious printer of Dr. Gill's Commentary and many other valuable works. The book itself shows that "Old Jonathan" is no other than the Rev. D. A. Doudney, formerly of Bonmahon, in Ireland, and

now Incumbent of St. Luke's, Bedminster; and when this is so obvious from the work itself, why employ a *cognomen*? *Secondly.* There are portions of the narrative too much *veiled*, and the effect is that of conducting the reader to an important event without making him acquainted with the necessary antecedents. The disclosure of such an event thus becomes too sudden and abrupt, and a feeling of disappointment is occasioned by the preliminary stages of those portions of the narrative having been kept so studiously out of sight. *Thirdly.* The two "boys" became Clergymen. Good so far, and the more the better; but we would remind our youthful readers especially, that not a few "boys" have risen to eminent usefulness apart from the Established Church. Such, for instance, as a Carey, a William Knibb, a John Williams, a Moffatt, and many more. We admit that some very choice flowers bloom in the "national" garden; but there are equally beautiful productions in the more open "regions beyond." *Fourthly.* The author comments on the "deep-seated prejudices of the Roman Catholic peasantry in Ireland." True; and it is a condition of things that not one among us can too deeply deplore. But is not *Irish* Protestantism itself responsible to no mean extent for those very prejudices? Have the Irish been fairly treated? How would Mr. Doudney himself regard an attempt to impose the church of *a minority* upon the great majority of Englishmen? Would there be no "deep-seated prejudices" in that case? Doubtless the Irish are faulty — very faulty, as we all are—but Tithes and other ecclesiastical demands, imposed upon them by the strong arm of mere power, will never make them a better people. Kindness, such as that evinced towards them by Mr. Doudney will do more for them in the long run, than all that the frown of power can ever effect. Exactions, under any name, will never convert a misguided people, or bring them over to a purer faith; but we should have hope of Ireland, even now, notwithstanding its rapid and alarming depopulation, were there a thousand or two of such devoted and excellent men as Mr. Doudney in that unhappy land, labouring as he laboured at Bonmahon, but on this great gospel principle alone, "*freely ye have received, freely give.*" Short of this, Ireland will yet be a wreck, a ruin, and a disgrace.

JESUS, "MIGHTY TO SAVE;" *or, Christ for all the World, and all the World for Christ.* By the Rev. ALEXANDER B. GROSART, Kinross, author of "Small Sins," &c., and Editor of Dr. Sibbes's works in the Puritan Divines. London: James Nisbet and Co., 22, Berner's-street. 190 pages.

This little volume is written by one who deserves to be heard. As editor of the works of Dr. Sibbes, he has contributed in no mean degree to the spread of sound and wholesome divinity; and from his evident care as an editor, he has become well acquainted with the principles of a theology, that belonged to a better age than our own. He avows himself to be a firm Calvinist, but he makes no useless attempt to reconcile the *apparent* incongruities connected with that Divinity system. He says,—

"Does any one return upon these amazing words, (John xvii. 2), and ask, Who are the many given to Christ? Then, blessed be God, my answer needeth not to be with an "uncertain sound,"—needeth not to be hesitant, as though unrevealed or half revealed. My answer is—EVERY ONE WHO WILL ACCEPT HIM ON

HIS OWN GRACIOUS TERMS AS A SAVIOUR: CHRIST FOR ALL THE WORLD—ALL THE WORLD FOR CHRIST. Nothing less, nothing else than that, have I to claim and proclaim for Him. I grant that, as a problem of metaphysics, as a speculative question, taking to "intermeddle" with matters "too high" for human ken, this may be, nay has been, darkened into very bewilderment and terror. But my answer "shuns profane and *vain* babblings, and oppositions of science, falsely so called." Once more, I am willing to leave "secret things" with my God and Father; I am willing to trust Him with election, predestination, foreordination, and all the other mysteries of our faith."—Pages 80, 81.

And again,—

"I cannot tell how free-will, choice, contingency, accord with predestination, election, foreordination, substitution. I do not feel that I am called upon to do so."—Page 88.

It is no pleasant task to differ from an author so candid as this; but it appears to us that throughout his work Mr. Grosart assumes too much for man antecedently to the grace of the Holy Spirit upon the heart. We say he *assumes* this, but nowhere asserts it in so many words, and this assumption we conceive to be open to grave question, *A predisposition to God, and goodness*, never yet dwelt in the heart of unrenewed man, and divines should be cautious of their words when treating upon such a point, since to imply what is not the fact, is equally unscriptural, unphilosophical, and useless.

The writer would also do well to guard himself against the employment of *Carlyleisms* in the shape of unsightly compounds such as *surface-waves*, *half-sadly*, *tear-filled*, *stereotype-uttered silver-sheening*, *poison-stung*, &c. &c. Mr. Grosart is too able a writer to need this literary *affectation*, and sure we are that he is of far too noble a mould to become the copyist of any man. In a few instances, as at pages 46, 59, 149, &c. his sentences are too wordy, and artificial, and abound with iterations. In a theme so great and sacred as that of MIGHTY TO SAVE, simplicity cannot be too apparent, nor the earnestness too direct.

BRIEF NOTICES.

The Atonement.—Dr. Christie's Reply to Colonel Shaw's Lecture at Carlisle. Carlisle: the "Express" Office, 23 pages. It appears that Col. Shaw appeared at Carlisle as the champion of "Morisonianism," which is one of the lowest types of modern Arminianism. Dr. Christie has replied to him in this pamphlet in a most manly and scriptural manner, and exposed the fallacy of one of the worst heresies of the day.

Christ for Every One. — By Newman Hall, LL.B. London: James Nisbet and Co. 64 pages. This is without exception, as fine a piece of *Schoolboy* Divinity, as we ever read. Mr. Hall certainly mentions the Holy Spirit, but nowhere introduces his *work*. It is man, man, man, throughout, as the contingent ground of salvation. If this milk and water piece is a fair specimen of Mr. Hall's usual teaching, then we say mournfully and with deep grief, Alas, alas, for Surrey Chapel!

The Destruction of Kagosima, and our Intercourse with Japan.—By Henry Richard. London: Jackson, Walford, and Hodder, Paternoster-row. 24 pages. This timely pamphlet, by one who has thoroughly mastered the subject, deserves a wide circulation. Were it a question of party politics, or one of national ambition merely, we would say at once, "Let the potsherds of the earth strive with the potsherds of the earth." With such useless, empty matters, these pages will never be soiled. But a

question of humanity—involving the lives of tens of thousands of mankind—and affecting moreover, the moral character of the first Christian nation upon earth,—is one not only deserving but loudly *demanding* the attention of every lover of his country, and every professed follower of Him who died for his enemies, and who even prayed for those that took away his life. We entreat our readers, therefore, to spend three-pence in the purchase of this important publication. It contains a full description of the unfortunate transaction at Kagosima, with much information respecting the Japanese generally, and the whole is given with an ability that does great honour to the author, as a powerful writer and a Christian man.

Intelligence.

SAXONY.

My beloved Bro. Woollacott.—I now commence from my last report in October to inform you of our proceedings to the present time.

Lord's Day, October 18th.—Preached as usual, and in the Sabbath-school we considered the doctrines and lessons in the parable of the "Rich man and the beggar." In the second service, I preached on "Infant Salvation;" this subject being then much talked about and questioned, in consequence of the death of an infant which had not been sprinkled.

On the 25th, having preached forenoon and afternoon in Halle, taught the school, and attended to various duties, on Monday morning I set out for various places in the country, where I was expected. At seven o'clock at night I reached Glamha, where I preached in the dancing-hall to a numerous attendance; the subject being Paul's sermon before Felix, (Acts xxiv. xxv.) which seemed to make a serious impression.

The day after I went to a bailiff in a neighbouring place, because he would prevent our meetings by refusing the legal permission. The objections he brought forward were, Because I did preach *the Word of God*, and did it in the public-houses and dancing-rooms. "If," he said, "I would lecture on something else he had no objection, and would even attend himself." I spoke a great deal with him, and tried in all love to acquaint him with our religion. At last, he told me that the clergy had induced him to prevent the meetings. I told him that as soon as I returned home I would write to the higher Magistrate to obtain permission, because this bailiff and the clergy persisted in their opposition. The next day I went to the same place, a very large village, again, to preach there, notwithstanding the prohibition. The largest dancing-hall, granted for the purpose, was crammed with people, and all went off very well, though the bailiff and the clergy threatened to disturb the meeting. Afterwards I wrote to the Magistrate, and have now got the answer that the bailiff has been instructed not to interfere with my meetings. On Thursday night I returned home

again, and conducted the meeting in Halle.

November 1st.—In the morning service of the day preached the free and sovereign Grace of God. In the afternoon I had the school, with about thirty children. In the evening service preached on the Ordinance of the Lord's Supper, from Matthew xxvi. 26–28. After this the celebration of the ordinance itself took place, which was unto us a good time. The following days of the week I was fully engaged with correspondence, and preparing again for the pulpit, school, and lecture hall.

Lord's Day, the 18th.—Preached in the morning on the sufferer Job, taught the school in the afternoon, and preached in the evening from Matthew xxvii. 22, "What shall I do then with Jesus?"

On the Monday following I travelled about thirty miles further to reach Rösa, where I was expected that night, and preached to a numerous attendance. May the Lord grant his Holy Spirit, without whom all would be in vain. I see, more and more, the necessity of the Holy Spirit in our preaching, prayers, and gatherings, and we long and sigh for the time of the great outpouring of the blessed Spirit.

The day following I preached in Bitterfeld, on the Sacrifices on Mount Moriah and Calvary, and in Roitsch to another audience on "The gain of the world and the loss of the soul." (Matt. xvi. 26) On Thursday evening considered the Ten Commandments. Friday and Saturday prepared again for the following Sabbath—on which I attended, through the Lord's grace, to the usual services.

On Monday morning I went to Leipzig, in behalf of our proceedings in the kingdom of Saxony. Having heard a few days ago that the Chamber of Deputies had commenced their sittings, I intended, with God's help, to write a special, explicit Petition to it, for the liberty of preaching the Gospel and the assembling of our brethren. In this, however, I required some advice, which I could only obtain in Leipzig; and it was good I went there, though I was quite differently advised to that I expected. Lawyers and other persons who were acquainted with these things, told me that such a petition would be quite in vain, as long as there does not exist a real Baptist church in the kingdom; and that the first and best thing to do would be to constitute a church, or that the scattered Baptists in the kingdom would unite as a special church. Now this I intended long since, but it has various difficulties. However, since I saw it was necessary and the will of God, I set to work to accomplish it without delay. I wrote to all our members around, who gladly consented; and we hoped by this time, the middle of December, to have achieved our aim. But another hindrance was permitted—and that a real popish one. I gave myself again to prayer, and wrote several letters on this affair, and hope we have now succeeded, so that early in the New Year the work of a church constitution may be accomplished. In the Lord's grace we *determine* to succeed, and nothing shall stop us.

I must now be brief. For the end of November I intended to preach in three different towns, where the Rationalists are at home, and where formerly I had testified the gospel of the grace of God, and that not without danger of

life,—but could not succeed. I was sorry about that; and whilst so another letter arrived, in which Brother Cramme, minister, and editor of the *Church Messenger*, asked for articles I had promised, and specially entreated me to write an Exposition on that much discussed passage in Hebrews vi. 4–6. I saw that this work was given me just when I had time to spare for it. I wrote a somewhat long explanation, — in which I showed the passage as a confirmation of the doctrine of final perseverance,—which doctrine is so little, hardly at all, known in Germany. Besides this, I wrote some other articles on Christianity and Rationalism, &c. Two Tracts of mine have been recently adopted for printing. Mr. Braun, Secretary of the Hamburg Society, writes: "In our meeting this morning your Tracts were read with pleasure, and both of them have been unanimously received for print. As soon as they are ready, you shall have a number of them." May the Lord Jesus crown them with his richest blessings!

Besides the conducting of the usual Sabbath and week-day services, I made also another tour in the neighbourhood of Nordhausen, about thirty miles from Halle, where last year I baptized two believers, whom now I visited, they being quite alone in that dark region. We celebrated the Lord's Supper; and besides our own meeting, I held a public one, at which a large crowd of all sorts of people attended, to whom I spoke of Jesus as a Saviour, and of themselves as sinners.

With this I must now conclude. We long and look for a time of great awakenings—which Jehovah has promised. May it soon, soon come, and all flesh see that the despised Nazarene is King and Lord—to whom be glory and honour for ever. Amen.

MORITZ GEISSLER,
Missionary.

Halle, Dec. 18, 1863.

LITTLE WILD-STREET, LONDON.

On January 1st, a valedictory service was held in the above place, on the retirement of the Rev. Christopher Woollacott, who has held the pastoral office during the long period of 50 years. His first charge was at Modbury, in Devonshire: all the ministers who laid their hands on his head on that occasion, with one exception, have long since entered their rest—that exception is the venerable Dr. Godwin, now residing at Bradford. Mr. Woollacott entered his labours in Wild-street, on January 1st, 1834. It was with evident emotion that he commenced the service, which will long be remembered by many, by reading the well-known hymn, "I my Ebenezer raise," &c. E. J. Oliver, Esq., an old friend of the pastor's, prayed. The chairman, Robert Lush, Esq. Q.C. in appropriate terms introduced the business of the evening; when the senior deacon (Mr. Balchin) addressed the pastor, reminding him that his first text had been 1 Cor. ii. 2, "I determined to know nothing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." "From that determination," he said, "you, dear sir, have never deviated." After referring to instances of usefulness in favour of his (Mr. Balchin's) children, he presented the pastor, in the name of the church, with a handsome purse, containing nearly £100. The pastor had some difficulty in acknowledging the gift, it was so far beyond anything he could have anticipated. He then assured the

meeting that his retirement from office was not occasioned by disaffection to his person or his ministry; that he intended to continue his membership there, and hoped to be enabled to preach occasionally in Wild-street, and elsewhere, the same gospel which had been the theme of his ministry for so many years. He felt, he said, that a younger man could better discharge the duties of a pastor, than one who has reached his seventy-fifth year. Another hymn, "Blest be the tie that binds," &c. was then announced by the Rev. S. Wills, D.D., after which addresses, marked alike by their eloquence and kindness, were delivered by the Revs. William Landels, Philip Dickerson, P. W. Williamson, F. Wills, George Wyard, and W. Brock. They all said that they had known and highly esteemed their aged brother and friend; and they congratulated him that he had been, by the grace of God, sustained so many years as a man of God and a Christian pastor: and that he was now retiring from the responsibilities of office, surrounded by a large and affectionate family, enjoying the love of all the members of the church, and the sympathy and regard of a numerous circle of friends. After a few remarks from the pastor, who referred to the pleasing fact, that his children, and many of his grandchildren had been brought by his instrumentality into the church, a vote of thanks to the chairman and ministers, was proposed by the pastor's son, who has for several years held the office of deacon in the church; this was seconded, and unanimously adopted. Mr. Lush, in his reply, expressed his high esteem for the pastor, with whom he said, he had been connected, in the family and in the church, more than 25 years. Several appropriate pieces were sung between the addresses. Other ministers and a numerous assembly testified their respect for the aged pastor, by their presence, and by the deep interest which they felt in the proceedings of the meeting. All joined heartily in the Doxology, and separated, praying sincerely for the now bereaved church, and for the minister, whose jubilee they had assisted to commemorate.

OBITUARY.

GEORGE CRUMLIN.

George Crumlin was hopefully brought to Christ in the "Irish Revival," being one of those who were usually called "converts," *i.e.* he was a subject of the physical affection, and that in an extraordinary degree, being frequently *deaf*, *dumb*, and *blind*. When he was first convinced of sin I visited him, and while I prayed at his bed-side, he professed to experience the peace of the gospel. Having afterwards learned the will of Christ on the subject of Baptism, he obeyed the Saviour's command by being baptized in His name on the 18th of September, 1859.

For some time he lived consistently with his profession. Indeed, of all the "converts" whom I have seen, he appeared to me the most promising—his views so clear—his confidence in Christ so strong—his prayers so fervent. So melting were his prayers that some of our elderly praying people who experienced less freedom, were led to doubt the reality of their own conversion. How sad, therefore, was our disappointment when we learned that he had become the victim of temptation, and that it became our painful duty to exclude him from the fellowship of the church!

It is pleasing to relate, however,

that after all, the Lord appears to have had mercy on him. He was visited with a lingering and painful disease, which I hope was sanctified to his soul; and which eventually proved fatal. On his death-bed he sent for me to visit him, which I did in the month of September last; and when I was about to leave him, he desired me to stay a little longer, as he had something special to say. He then acknowledged his sins very penitently—said that he had fled to Christ as his only hope, and desired me to mention his case to the church and ask the forgiveness of the members; and also requested to be restored to the fellowship of the church, as he earnestly desired to be united to the church above. I need not say that his desire was granted. On the 4th of October he was restored to full communion.

During his illness I frequently visited him, and every visit increased my confidence in his sincerity. I saw him about two hours before his death. He was unable to speak; but his conduct indicated that he was perfectly sensible. He grasped my hand, and maintained his hold until I pulled myself away from him. On the same day (December 5th) he fell asleep in Jesus, being in the twenty-fourth year of his age.

I improved his death on the following Sabbath from Psalm lxxxix. 30–33, of which his dying experience was a beautiful illustration: "If His children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments: if they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments; then will I visit their transgressions with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, my loving kindness will I not utterly take from Him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail."

JOHN BROWN.

Conlig Manse, Newtownards, Ireland, Jan. 1864.

THE BAPTIST SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.

On the 12th instant, at its monthly committee meeting at Shaftsbury Hall, deputations were appointed to visit our Sunday Schools in London, to explain our objects, and invite their co-operation with us. The several districts are those of the post-office divisions of this great city.

A sub-committee was formed "to examine and report what publications can be recommended to the Schools of this Union." Its members are—Ministers S. Milner, W. Palmer, J. Glaskin, and W. Hawkins; Messrs. H. Cooper, T. M. Whittaker, G. T. Congreve, G. Pearson, W. C. Kemp, J. Briscoe, junr., T. James, G. New, T. W. Cooper, and — Waite.

The Schools of Dacre Park, Homerton Row, and Peckham, all of London, have been received, also the School of Chatteris, Isle of Ely, under the pastorate of Mr. Silverton. To this example of a distant school we call attention as one, where, by a subscription of five shillings or upwards annually, they share the pleasure of uniting in a great work among the young.

It was delighful to hear from the Keppel Street representatives, of the hearty manner in which the teachers of Brother Milner's school voluntarily subscribe to the object, which they stated is likely to produce £5 in the year. Of course this liberality is entirely optional, only it deserves a place in this summary of proceedings.

Two letters were read from gen-

tlemen in the country, containing donations, and warm expressions of interest in our success. These are examples worthy of imitation throughout the land. And let it be repeated, that a subscription of five shillings or upwards, constitutes each contributor a member of this union, with power to vote at public meetings, &c.

Our Financial Secretary declared a cheering sum in hand; other practical measures were passed, and, with some important notices of motions, the meeting closed with prayer. W. HAWKINS.

January 16, 1864.

A BAPTIST DISCUSSION.

JOHN TOMBES AND RICHARD BAXTER.—This church (Bewdley) is rather more ancient than the one at Bromsgrove, having been commenced in 1646 or 1648 by the celebrated clergyman of Bewdley, the Rev. John Tombes, B.D. who, in all probability, was also the founder of the churches at Leominster, Hereford, and other places. "Of the professed Anabaptists," says Mr. Wall, in his defence of Infant Baptism, "Mr. Tombes was a man of the best parts in our nation, and perhaps in any." The Lords in their conference with the Commons on the "Occasional Conformity" bill, call him "a very learned and famous man." This eminent man was born at Bewdley, in 1603, and having made rapid proficiency in his university studies at Oxford, he became lecturer at Magdalen Hall, at the early age of 21 years. While engaged in these duties, and reading extensively for their proper discharge, he began to suspect the validity of infant baptism. He was a powerful and popular preacher wherever he laboured, which he did at Worcester, Leominster, Bristol, and in London, where he was chosen lecturer, by the Templars. He held a private meeting in 1643, with the most learned of the London ministers, to whom he proposed his doubts concerning infant baptism, but received no satisfactory reply. In the same year he communicated his scruples to the Westminster Assembly of Divines, in an elaborate argument in Latin, but no reply was made by that body. At Leominster he was plundered by the king's forces "of almost all he had in the world," and again at Bristol, where he narrowly escaped a still greater calamity.

In 1645 he returned to his native place, where he boldly avowed his sentiments on baptism, and soon after formed the above church. The popularity he acquired as a preacher speedily raised him into notice, and the fearless fidelity with which he practised the principles of believers' baptism soon brought him into collision with Richard Baxter, who, at that time, was minister in the neighbouring town of Kidderminster, and who, it appears, challenged him to a public disputation. This took place at Bewdley, on January 1st, 1649, before a crowded multitude, whom the celebrity and known ability of the disputants had brought together, from the whole neighbourhood. It commenced before ten in the morning, and lasted without intermission to between four and five in the afternoon. The representations of the combatants themselves, are mixed up, on both sides, with too much warmth of temper, and with too many personalities, to be implicitly relied on; but an impartial historian, in the person of Wood, the Oxford writer, remarks on this controversy that "All scholars then and there present, however, who knew the way of disputing and managing arguments, did conclude that Mr. Tombes got the better of Baxter, by far."

Mr. Tombes held three other public disputes, one at Ross, one at Abergavenny, and one at Hereford; and in 1653 he was chosen, on account of his character and learning, one of the "Tryers." He subsequently retired to Salisbury, where he died, May 25, 1676, aged 73 years.—*From the History of the Midland Association.* By William Stokes.

OPEN COMMUNION BAPTISTS.

BY AN AMERICAN.

Not long since, the following appeared in the *Freeman*, from its *American correspondent*. It deserves a careful, and a frequent reading:—"While war is the engrossing topic with us, we notice that you are discussing peaceful themes, and among others one that surprises us Baptists in America, viz., the union of the Baptists with the Congregationalists and Presbyterians. The bare proposition shows that the Baptists of England, and those in America, stand on very different platforms. Here, the most sanguine wisher for union would not dream of such a coalition. It is, indeed, a matter of surprise, when we find John Howard Hinton, a leader of English Baptists, at a meeting of the Congregational Union in London, saying, that 'the difference between Independents and Baptists was so small, that it was difficult to account for their not being united. The very name they had taken of late years—Congregationalists was equally applicable to Baptists, and his own church numbered several Pædobaptist members.' Now, if Mr. Hinton is a Baptist, we, in this land, are not. We have no denomination here that numbers among its members Baptist and Pædobaptist converts. The Pædobaptists are Pædobaptists, and the Baptists are Baptists. There is not a Baptist church in these States that has Pædobaptist members. We know not what to make of such statements as we find in the London *Patriot*, one writer in which says:—'We are writing within fifty yards of a Baptist chapel, in which, besides the admission as members of all who apply, whether Baptists or not, a principal part is taken on public occasions by a very respectable and intelligent gentleman, who, with regard to baptism, is a downright Quaker.' And yet, is not this the legitimate result of open communion? 'Not a few, says *The Patriot*,' among the Baptists, seeing the absurdity of excluding from the church those who are admitted to the Lord's table, have ceased to make that which is no longer a term of communion a condition of membership.' It is absurd to exclude from church-membership those whom we admit to communion. That can hardly be disputed. So we prefer to keep clear of the absurdity of open communion. We find no ground to stand on, between strict communion and Pædobaptism. The man who endeavours to stand between the two is on an inclined plane, and must slide. The open communion follows mixed membership, and then comes the coalition suggested by Mr. Hinton. But will Mr. Hinton be able to carry the Baptists of England over to his unnatural alliance? Will they be transferred to the loving bosom of Pædobaptism? It seems reasonable that the transfer should be made, if the churches are numerous which admit unbaptized members. We should be sorry to part company with our English brethren, who come to us with the great names of Andrew Fuller, Robert Hall, John Foster, William Carey, and a multitude of great and good men. We should be sorry to have Bloomsbury Chapel, Devonshire-square, Regent's-park, and Commercial-street, converted into Con-

gregational meeting-houses. But the Baptists of America have prospered and are now prospering under close-communion banners, or what we prefer to say here, under *close baptism* banners, and we are content with the flag."

AFRICA.

Dr. Livingstone, writing from Africa, under the date of February 20th, 1863, gives the following cheering account of the progress of education and religion in that hitherto neglected part of the African continent:—

"Over twenty missions have been established, twenty dialects reduced to writings, and 12,000 communicants have been received by the different churches. Education is imparted to thousands of the young, and good influences are spreading inland. Lawful commerce has been increased from £20,000 annually, to between £2,000,000 and £3,000,000, and more tonnage is employed in carrying it than ever was engaged in the slave trade, even in its palmiest days. On this coast, the same expansive and generous policy has been in operation as long as on the West Coast, and the only mission introduced is jammed up in an unhealthy corner by slave-holding complications, and will probably die out. All the revenue derived from the whole Zambesi amounts to only £600 per annum. In fact, the country has been a slave 'preserve;' and so would the West Coast have been, had only a few converts been admitted to the interior, as here. We turn our eyes away to Lake Nyassa, and hope to do something to stop slavery there. We trust also something may be done to prevent these ruffians following on the footsteps of our discoveries. If we meet them, it may not be wholesome for either party."

MINISTERIAL RE-APPOINTMENT.

Mr. R. Ward, recently of Glossop, has accepted the unanimous invitation of the Baptist Church, at Hunslet, Leeds, to become their pastor, and is now labouring among them in the word and doctrine of Christ.

BAPTISMS.

ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE. — On Lord's Day, January 3rd, Mr. William Stokes, of Manchester, baptized nine candidates in the presence of a numerous assembly. The discourse, being appropriated chiefly to the opening service of the New Year, was founded on the words, "The Lord of Hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge." (Psalm xlvi. 7) The foregoing candidates, with three others restored, and dismissed from neighbouring churches, were received by the right hand of fellowship at the Lord's Supper in the afternoon, after a suitable address to each by Mr. Stokes.

WAINSGATE, NEAR HEBDEN BRIDGE.—On the first Lord's Day in the year, eight candidates were baptized by Mr. Bamber.

BOROUGH GREEN, KENT. — On Lord's Day, January 3rd, Mr. Frith baptized two believers, after a sermon from Revelations ii. 10.

CONLIG, IRELAND.—On Lord's Day, January 10th, Mr. Brown had the pleasure of baptizing two disciples in the name of the Lord Jesus.

FARNBOROUGH, KENT. — On New Year's Eve, five disciples were baptized at the Baptist Chapel, Bridge Street, Greenwich, (kindly lent for the occasion) by Mr. George Webb—making seventeen in two years—and more are waiting.

MARRIAGE AND PRESENTATION TO A SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHER.

On the 20th of December, 1863, at the Baptist Chapel, Millwood, Todmorden, by Mr. H. Hall, of Bacup, Mr. Abram Greenwood, of Ardsley, near Leeds, to Miss Grace Pilling, of Todmorden. A beautiful Bible was presented to the bride, by her Sabbath-school class. Miss Pilling had been in the school 23 years. The Bible contained the following inscription:—"Presented to Grace Pilling, by the scholars of her class, at Millwood